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AN APPEAL

TO THE

FEDERAL SOLDIERS.

SOLDIERS: Two years of our sanguinary conflict have passed; hundreds of thousands of brave men have fallen; hearts have been made to mourn, homes have been desolated; and the voice of sorrow and sadness is heard throughout your land and ours. We both desire peace.

Let us, therefore, for a moment lay aside the weapons of strife, and reason together on the lessons this conflict is adapted to teach.

We of the South have seceded from a Union we had once loved, and have unfurled to the world the emblem of a new nationality. It was because sectional prejudice and ill-will in the North had raised into the Chair of State a man whose political principles led him to wage a continual war against our interests and constitutional rights.

Slavery was the *apparent*, though not the *real* cause of war. That *real* cause lay in the diversity of our interests. You were a commercial and manufacturing people, and demanded protective tariffs; we an agricultural people, whose interests demanded free trade. Hence arose continual bickerings. Your politicians seized upon abolitionism as a convenient pretext for exciting the popular mind against us.

Their policy first met only scorn and disdain from your people, believing it as they did a base interference with our institutions and rights. But slowly and silently the poison spread. Meetings were held, and inflammatory speeches made by men utterly ignorant of the true condition of the slave; men, who scrupled not by deceit and lying, to misrepresent the South. Your people have been deceived, and, led on by these wicked men, we now see the result of their teachings in a nation's agony and dissolution, in the slaughter of thousands, in the misery of millions.

At the elevation into power of a sectional party with entirely sectional interests, we determined on separation. Long before had we threatened it if our rights were not respected, but the Republican leaders had laughed these threats to scorn, and said "let them go."

The issue was now forced upon us, and we formed our new Government. Self-preservation and national honor left us no other alternative. We still desired a peaceful separation, and sent our Commissioners to

Washington to effect it. They were denied even a hearing, and we were compelled to prepare for war.

Your Government promised you an *easy victory* over us. Your armies, vastly outnumbering ours, were splendidly equipped and well armed; ours were poorly clad and bore inferior weapons. You expressed your trust in the magnitude of your resources and overpowering numbers. Our confidence was in the justice of our cause, our trust in the God of battles.

We met at Manassas. Your hosts were overthrown. Your nation, enraged by defeat, now thoroughly aroused all its mighty energies to prepare for a crushing war, while in your armories, workshops and navy yards, was heard the bustle of a new industry.

We were without manufactories, and our ports were sealed to the commerce of the world; but trusting in God we marched to the frontier to repel your invading host.

Soldiers! we have met on many a bloody field. Often have we joined in deadly strife. Many of your comrades and many of mine have fallen by our sides, and now ask yourselves the question, has "the battle been to the strong?"

You were told of a *Union party in the South*. As you have advanced into our territory have you found our people welcoming you as deliverers? Has not every foot of soil been hotly contested?

You were told of the great love your *leaders* bore for the *Union*. Had they been sincere would they ever have said "let them go?" Would they now have forced us to its dissolution? or would they have been guilty of the folly of fighting us, to enkindle in our hearts new love for our oppressors?

The Union that they loved was not the Union founded by Washington, but it was a Union by which they hoped to compel us, by force if necessary, to endure all their injustice and tyranny without a murmur. They forgot that we were freemen like themselves.

Failing in their efforts to subjugate us, they proclaimed *our negroes free*, and endeavored to incite them to insurrection among us. They received them into your army as your equals to fight by your side, and compelled you to pay them a respect you could not feel.

They tell you that we are *starving*, and bid you wait a few more days or months to witness our downfall. They are again striving to deceive you. Although deprived of many of those luxuries we formerly enjoyed, we still have *enough*, and our crops promise abundance.

Soldiers! your leaders have been and are deceiving you. When your President was inaugurated in March, 1861, did he not take his solemn oath, before God and the nation, to administer his duties in accordance with the law and the Constitution of the land? Has not his every act falsified that oath? Has not a higher law been established, even the imperial will of the dictator?

Soldiers! *this Union can never be restored*. Our separation into two

distinct nationalities is lasting, permanent, and final. We have suffered much and can suffer more. We are all prepared to make every needful sacrifice on the altar of our country's liberty. But one unalterable determination exists among us—that we will never give up our right to self-government. Was not that right established in the colonial war with England? Did not your ancestors and mine pour out their blood in fighting for the same right for which the South is now contending? Will not the result be the same? Rather than give up that right we will fight till the last right arm is cold in death. And if we should die, we will show you how freemen ought to die, sword in hand, resisting oppression.

Soldiers! this war may go on. * You and I may fall on the field of battle, but the *South never can be conquered*. Your leaders may strive to make it an "*irrepressible conflict*." What care they for the thousands slain while their wicked purpose remains unaccomplished? They are not exposed themselves to the privations of war or the dangers of battle. Did they not press your men who were just about returning to their homes from the Army of the Rappahannock into the very thickest of the fight, that they might be the first to fall? Call ye this generous reward for all their privations, sufferings and toil?

Soldiers! beware; those very men who are seeking to overthrow our rights are equally undermining yours. They tell you that they are fighting in the cause of humanity and religion. Have not half a million of the brave already fallen victims to this misdirected philanthropy, this misguided religion?

Look to the dungeons of Fort Lafayette and to the newspapers they have suspended, if you would see the fate of those that dare utter an independent opinion. Look to Vallandigham, dragged before a military tribunal, tried, condemned and banished, because he dared to use the right of the American citizen to free thought and free speech. And remember that Napoleon III. used his Presidential Chair only as a stepping stone to the throne of France.

They are striving to give freedom to the slave who is not capable of enjoying it, that they may drag *you, freemen*, into a servitude far more galling than African bondage. Instead of enslaving inferiors they strive to enslave you, their equals, and that in a country which has so much boasted of Republican equality. They are bringing upon you an enormous debt which will never be paid.

Have you thought of the consequences of success to your country's cause? Of the casting among you of four millions of slaves utterly unable to care for themselves? Would not their natural idleness speedily reduce them again to the savage state? Would not the poor negro, unable to cope with your superior energy, and driven by despair to the commission of the most dreadful crimes, commence a conflict which would end in his utter extermination? Would not larceny, rapine, arson and murder, overrun and deluge your fair land with

blood? Have you thought of the dreadful suffering that must follow the repudiation of your debt? And will the condition of your country be improved by continuing the war, by sacrificing more lives, by increasing that debt?

Some among you are Irishmen.

Irishmen! you come among us seeking a land of freedom and of thrift. Exiles from your native land, which now lies a victim to English tyranny, you seek among us a refuge and a home.

Is not the South battling in the same cause in which Ireland fought during her revolutions? Have we not your Mitchel with us? You have fled from the land which oppressed you, and will you now join our oppressor? Your ancestors fought to prevent a union with England they did not desire, and will you now strive to force us to a Union we detest?

Some of you are Scotchmen.

Scotchmen! has your characteristic love of justice and right been forgotten? Are the patriotic examples of your own Wallace and Bruce to be lost on their descendants? Does the patriotic poetry of your Burns excite in you no love of constitutional liberty and right? We thought not to meet you in the ranks of a tyrant.

Many of you are Germans.

Germans! you have brought with you from your fatherland the elements of thrift and success. Your persevering industry has cultivated the fertile lands of the great West, and promises you opulence and wealth. We, too, are an agricultural people. Our interests are the same. We are natural allies. Why are we at variance? Your leaders are deceiving you. They are making you strike the dagger into your own bosoms. They make you fight their battles while they, quietly remaining at home, are making fortunes out of your necessities.

Soldiers! will you longer continue this dreadful war? Must the war still go on; must more lives be sacrificed and more hearts be made to bleed? We desire not to invade your land or deprive you of your rights. All we wish is to be left to the enjoyment of our own.

Will you longer strive to save from a certain ruin that Administration which has so often deceived you, and which is striving equally to overthrow your rights and ours.

Soldiers! will you quietly submit while despotism is drawing its cords more and more tightly round your necks? Will you longer remain the tools of a corrupt and wicked Administration? Forbid it reason; forbid it justice; forbid it liberty!

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